

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An absorbent article for absorbing body fluids comprising an absorbent core constructed and arranged for receiving and holding such fluids and including a reinforcing scrim member intimately associated with the absorbent core to 5 maintain its structural integrity in use, said scrim member comprising a network of machine direction (MD) strands extending in a machine direction, and cross direction (CD) strands extending in a cross direction, at least some of said MD strands and CD strands crossing over each other and being 10 interconnected, said MD strands being selected and formed to provide a predetermined stiffness and strength in supporting said absorbent core in the machine direction, and said CD strands being selected and formed with at least one characteristic difference from said MD strands to provide a 15 reduced stiffness of the absorbent core in the cross direction.

2. The absorbent article as set forth in claim 1, wherein the MD strands are elongate and are spaced with a first preset frequency, and at least some of said CD strands have as a characteristic difference a second reduced 5 frequency spacing relative to the spacing frequency of the MD strands.

3. The absorbent article as set forth in claim 2, wherein the reduced frequency of CD strands to the frequency of MD strands is in a ratio of about 0.9 (CD) to 1.0 (MD).

4. The absorbent article as set forth in claim 3 wherein the ratio is about 0.75 (CD) to 1.0 (MD).

5. The absorbent article as set forth in claim 3,  
wherein the ratio is about 0.5 (CD) to 1.0 (MD).

6. The absorbent article according to claim 3, wherein  
the reduced frequency range of CD strands is about 0.9 to 0.5  
relative to the frequency of MD strands at 1.0.

7. The absorbent article as set forth in claim 2, in  
which the second reduced frequency spacing of the CD strands  
is varied in different zones of the elongate MD strands to  
5 provide a variance in stiffness between such zones.

8. The absorbent article as set forth in claim 7,  
wherein the machine direction of the scrim member has end  
zones and a central zone, and said second reduced frequency  
5 spacing of CD strands being provided in said central zone.

9. The absorbent article as set forth in claim 1,  
wherein said MD strands have strand diameters, and wherein  
said CD strands have as a characteristic difference a strand  
5 diameter less than said MD strand diameter.

10. The absorbent article as set forth in claim 9,  
wherein a strand diameter ratio of the CD strand diameter to  
the MD strand is less than about 0.95.

11. The absorbent article as set forth in claim 10,  
wherein the strand diameter ratio is less than about 0.9.

12. The absorbent article as set forth in claim 11,  
wherein the strand diameter ratio is less than about 0.75.

13. The absorbent article as set forth in claim 12,  
wherein the strand diameter ratio is less than about 0.5.

14. The absorbent article as set forth in claim 1,  
wherein both of said MD strands and said CD strands are  
round, and the CD strands are smaller than the MD strands.

15. The absorbent article as set forth in claim 1,  
wherein at least some of said CD strands are generally  
elliptical and have major and minor axes, the minor axis  
being arranged substantially normal to a plane of the MD  
5 strands.

16. The absorbent article as set forth in claim 1  
wherein the MD strands are generally elliptical, having major  
and minor axes, the CD strands are generally elliptical  
5 having major and minor axes, the minor axes of the CD strands  
being on average of a lesser dimension than the minor axes of  
the MD strands.

17. The absorbent article as set forth in claim 1,  
wherein the network of MD strands and CD strands is formed  
with at least some of the CD strands having weakened points  
5 along their lengths to enhance buckling.

18. The absorbent article as set forth in claim 17  
wherein the CD strands are notched, abraded or compressed at  
predetermined places between preselected MD strands to  
5 provide the weakened points.

19. The absorbent article as set forth in claim 18,  
wherein the weakened points on one of the CD strands are  
offset in the cross direction from the weakened points on an  
5 adjacent CD strand.

20. The absorbent article as set forth in claim 18,  
wherein the weakened points are reduced in at least one  
transverse dimension of the CD strands as compared to other  
5 parts of the CD strands.

21. The absorbent article as set forth in claim 18,  
wherein the weakened points on the CD strands are cut  
through, and such weakened points on one CD strand offset  
5 from the weakened points on an adjacent CD strand.

22. The absorbent article as set forth in claim 17  
wherein the CD strands contain an additive which forms the  
weakened points.

23. The absorbent article as set forth in claim 22  
wherein the additive is calcium carbonate.

24. The absorbent article as set forth in claim 1,  
wherein the CD strand is corrugated and forms peaks and  
valleys along the cross direction thereof, and said MD  
5 strands being arranged to engage the CD strands across the  
peaks and valleys thereof.

25. The absorbent article as set forth in claim 1,  
wherein the CD strands are woven across the MD strands.

26. The absorbent article as set forth in claim 1,  
wherein the MD strands are formed of a material having a  
final preselected higher modulus of elasticity, and the CD  
5 strands are formed of a material with a second preselected  
lower modulus of elasticity to provide at least one  
characteristic difference selected from a class of properties

comprising greater softness, more flexibility, greater elasticity, less resistance to buckling and bending.

27. The absorbent article as set forth in claim 1 wherein the absorbent article is a disposable garment.

28. The absorbent article as set forth in claim 27 wherein the absorbent article is a diaper.

29. The absorbent article as set forth in claim 27 wherein the absorbent article is a child's training pants.

30. The absorbent article as set forth in claim 27 wherein the absorbent article is one of an adult incontinence diaper, adult incontinence pad, adult incontinence pant and  
5 adult incontinence undergarment.